

REMARKS

Claims 13-15 are presently pending and under consideration.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) over Barker et al. (US Pat. No. 6,645,452), filed November 28, 2000. Applicants submit that the present application claims priority to PCT Application No. WO/0060680, filed October 12, 2000. As the priority date of the present application predates that of the cited reference, Barker et al. does not qualify as prior art to the present application, and the rejection should be removed.

Attached please find a copy of the verification of translation for your review.

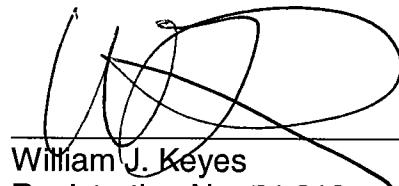
Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests the issuance of a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner desires, Applicant welcomes a telephone interview to expedite prosecution and is available at the telephone number below. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to deduct any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-3140.

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Respectfully submitted,



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